

## **Mayor Deb Higgins – July 12, 2013**

Even though there is lots to see and do in Saskatchewan, we often look to other provinces or destinations when planning a family vacation. Tourism Saskatchewan and the local tourism regions have been working hard to change that attitude by showing residents and others just what Saskatchewan has to offer and to provide residents with “staycation” options.

The impact of tourism on Saskatchewan’s economy is significant. A surprising fact is that tourism provincially employs more than twice the number of people than oil, gas and mining industries. Each year approximately 9.1 million visits are made within Saskatchewan, almost half of which are for one or more nights. This results in tourism being a major employer for the province, with one in 10 residents working in the sector.

Tourism not only creates jobs in the service industry, but encourages growth in other areas of the economy. Hotels host business travelers, restaurants feed work crews, and gas stations supply fuel to transport vehicles. Tourism dollars create a multiplier effect that flows through all sectors of the economy, generating revenue and supporting employment.

As a more established tourism destination, Moose Jaw has seen first-hand the positive impact of tourism. Think of downtown Moose Jaw a decade ago, now have a look at it today. Our City has become a hub of activity while continuing to grow and embrace the tourism industry. People are stopping in Moose Jaw to shop, visit, and spend time at local museums, attend performances at the cultural centre, participate or attend multiple sporting events, tour points of interest, or relax at the City’s array of spa facilities. These are all part of being a tourism destination spot and the result is a more vibrant community and improved services that we all enjoy and benefit from.

The overall impact of travel and tourism is estimated at \$1.68 billion annually to our province. More specifically to Moose Jaw, travel and tourism generates an estimated \$85 million annually in revenue to the City with over 559,000 visitors for either same day, overnight or longer visits. These are impressive numbers with unlimited opportunity to grow.

I would encourage you to spend some time to take in local events or attractions, and if you have a few open days head to a place in Saskatchewan that you’ve always wanted to see, there are lots of sites that are close enough to make a day trip. Our Tourism Moose Jaw Visitor Centre is a wonderful resource of information and knowledgeable people that will gladly help you plan or offer suggestions to make your summer the best possible.

Deb Higgins  
Mayor